

Keith Samuels is extra-time hero

Wycombe Wanderers 3, Slough Town 2

IN FRONT OF 3,422 spectators, basking in Easter Monday's sunshine, Wycombe Wanderers pulled off the coup of the season, when they defeated Slough Town in a titanic struggle for the Berks and Bucks Senior Cup at Chesham.

As was the case last year, 30 minutes extra-time was required to decide if the cup would be placed in the board-room at the Dolphin or Loakes Park. Happily, the trophy is coming back to Wycombe to raise a cheer in a season full of disappointment.

Slough, obviously considered odds-on favourites, were bidding for a hat-trick of championships this season. They have already tucked away under their belts the Athenian League premier division title and the Wycombe Floodlight League Cup. With two comprehensive victories over Wanderers earlier this season the "Rebels" must have fancied their chances of completing a triple-title success.

The match, as a whole, was not a spectacle in regard to attractive football. What it did contain was plenty of incident, excitement and tension—all vital ingredients for cup battles. Certainly, the large crowd, packed closely around the picturesque Chesham ground, appreciated this intriguing tussle.

RAGGED PHASES

In fact, large slices of the game were noticeable only for the phases of ragged and uncoordinated play. Both teams made numerous unforced errors and in the early stages players

Manager-coach Barry Darvill said after the match amid jubilant scenes in the Wanderers dressing-room, "I was confident we would pull it off in extra-time. This was a team victory and all the boys fought hard, I would not pick anyone out for special praise."

looked very jittery, with each side displaying a tendency to cancel out the other in mid-field.

There was a shock for Wycombe supporters even before the game commenced. Stuart Thompson failed a late fitness test and Peter Martin came into the team at left-back, with Charlie Gale moving to wing-half.

However, the real drama followed with the news that Wanderers' right-back, Ian Rundle, was caught up in the heavy traffic going to the match. Manager-coach, Barry Darvill, sent out substitute, Steve Holmes, who stayed on for the opening 12 minutes until Rundle arrived.

Slough impressed in the first half-hour with their general all-round mobility, especially when breaking from defence. Passes galore were going astray in midfield and there was hardly any method to be seen from either side, all the players appearing to be over-awed by the occasion.

Little was seen of Slough's infamous off-side trap, which is operated with military-like precision, but Wycombe soon discovered a tactical answer to Slough's move of bringing John Delaney up for every corner, by calling back Les Merrick to mark the dangerous centre-half.

After 40 minutes of cut-and-thrust exchanges, Wanderers opened the scoring. Busby blocked the path of Slough's 17-years-old reserve keeper Kernoghan and, in a moment of panic, the youngster threw the ball clear to Ford, breaking the first rule of football—never pass across the front of your own goal. He was to pay dearly for forgetting this golden rule.

Ford had no time to bring the clearance under control before Horseman had robbed him, galloped into the box and with Kernoghan hopelessly out of position, slipped his shot into the net.

POLICE MOVE IN

After this goal, Police were called to the end which John Maskell was occupying where a large number of Slough supporters were situated. The Wycombe keeper complained that he had been pelted with coins after Horseman had put Wanderers ahead.

Slough bounced right back into the running with two goals in four minutes, soon after the resumption which set the game alight. In the 53rd minute Reardon shuffled his way across the Wanderers' box and passed to Hatt who miscued his effort. But, the shot bounced awkwardly for Martin, who should have cleared first time and Mullan was on hand to snap up the rebound and equalise.

Roared on by the Slough contingent and encouraged by their simple equalising goal the "Rebels" came forward at the Wycombe defence probing for another weak link. They found it four minutes later as Mullan made a forceful break down the right-wing and crossed for Hatt to head Slough in front.

Now, the Slough off-side trap was in abundance and Viv Busby was caught in the web on a number of occasions. Busby should, however, have equalised when he sprinted clear but lobbed his shot well over the top.

But, five minutes from the end Wycombe's deadly little marksman, Tony Horseman, turned up trumps again—this time to equalise. Hartridge, tied himself in a terrible tangle and Horseman won possession and streaked towards goal. With four Slough defenders converging on him from different angles, Horseman delicately chipped his shot, first bounce, into the empty net.

Once again, Wanderers were forced to go into extra-time in search of the Senior Cup. Last year the trophy slipped from their grasp when Chesham won in the final 30 minutes, but one could sense the grit and determination throughout the team, that they would not surrender without a dour fight.

Within a minute an astonished Horseman had seen his shot rebound from the underside of the bar and into the surprised Kernoghan's arms. At the other end, Reardon let Wycombe off the hook when, with an open goal, he sliced his shot wide of the right-hand post.

SAMUELS BOOKED

So, into the final, pulsating 15-minute spell and Samuels became the first player to be booked by referee Mr. D. L. Forbes for a late tackle on Wright.

Just four minutes from the end Wanderers scored the vital winner, in what was, perhaps, the best move of the entire match. Worley

Wycombe secretary Bill Hayter commented, "I was very, very pleased with our fine win. At times I thought we showed our Isthmian class and I would like to thank the Wanderers' supporters for their encouragement."

showed a wonderful piece of finesse—sending two opponents the wrong way and swerved a cross towards the far post. Horseman, standing on the bye-line, headed the centre back into the middle and there was Samuels, running forward to tuck the ball safely into the right-hand corner.

The Wycombe fans erupted with jubilation as the Slough players rushed protesting to the linesman. After consulting his linesman, the referee ignored Slough's claim that Horseman had headed the ball back when it was out of play and pointed, dramatically, to the middle.

As Keith Samuels led his weary band of gallant players to receive the cup, one could not help reflecting that this victory was essentially a team win. But two individuals stood out—Tony Horseman for the cool way he took both his goals and Vince Faulkner who commanded the middle with authority, winning nearly every duel in the air.

Wycombe Wanderers: J. Maskell; I. Rundle, P. Martin; B. Baker, V. Faulkner, C. Gale; L. Worley, K. Samuels, V. Busby, A. Horseman, L. Merrick. Subs: S. Holmes.